

REMARKS

Claims 21-32 are pending. Claims 21 and 32 are the independent claims. Claims 21 and 32 have been amended to more clearly define the invention. Claim 23 has been amended to correct a typographical error. Claim 31 has been amended to address the objection in the Action.

All claims stand rejected as unpatentable over Sommargren (U.S. Patent 4,746,216). We traverse.

We submit that Sommargren does not teach or suggest “a polarizing beam splitting interface ... positioned relative to the common face of the block to separate each intermediate beam into a measurement component and a reference component having different polarizations,” as recited in claims 21 and 32. The Action points to polarizing coating 42 in Sommargren as meeting this limitation. However, polarizing coating 42 never “separate[s] each intermediate beam into a measurement component and a reference component having different polarizations,” as required by the independent claims.

To the contrary, Figure 1 in Sommargren shows that the beams emerging from tilted shear plate 16 are both transmitted by polarizing coating 42, then both twice-reflected by it, and then both transmitted by it. Also see Sommargren at 3:69-5:1, 4:10-12, 4:13-15, and 4:23-26. Indeed, to the extent Sommargren separates a beam “into a measurement component and a reference component having different polarizations,” as claimed, such separation is produced by tilted shear plate 16, not by polarizing coating 42 - “The function of shear plate (16) is to spatially separate the two polarization components [of input beam 12] using conventional polarization techniques” (Sommargren at 3:47-49).

Because polarizing coating 42 never separates each beam from tilted shear plate 16 into components having different polarizations, we submit that Sommargren does not teach or suggest “a polarizing beam splitting interface ... positioned relative to the common face of the block to separate each intermediate beam into a measurement component and a reference component having different polarizations,” as recited in claims 21 and 32 (emphasis added).

Dependent claims 22-31 distinguish Sommargren for at least the same reasons as independent claims 21 and 32.

Applicant* : Andrew Eric Carlson
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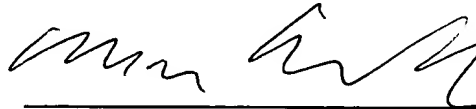
We therefore ask the Examiner to withdraw the rejection and allow the claims.

Enclosed is a check for the Petition for Extension of Time fee. Please apply any other charges or credits to deposit account 06-1050.

Respectfully submitted,

Date: _____

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Marc M. Wefers* for
David L. Feigenbaum
Reg. No. 30,378

Fish & Richardson P.C.
225 Franklin Street
Boston, MA 02110-2804
Telephone: (617) 542-5070
Facsimile: (617) 542-8906

***See attached document certifying that Marc M. Wefers has limited recognition to practice before the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office under 37 C.F.R. § 10.9(b).**